Amendment to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications system for provisioning an inter-provider internet protocol (IP) service, comprising:

a first network ~~associated with~~ managed by a first service provider, said first network having a plurality of resources;

a second network ~~associated with~~ managed by a second service provider, said second network having a plurality of resources, said second network being operable to receive a request for the inter-provider IP service;

means for determining real-time availability of first ones of the plurality of resources of said first network needed for the inter-provider IP service and real-time availability of second ones of the plurality of resources of said second network needed for the inter-provider IP service; and

means for automatically provisioning the inter-provider IP service between the first network and the second network using the first resources and the second resources.

2. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 1, further comprising:

means for advertising the availability of the plurality of resources of said first network and the availability of the plurality of resources of said second network between said first network and said second network.

3. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 1, further comprising:

a unified and integrated switch connected to said first network and said second network, said unified and integrated switch having common resources, a first portion of the common resources being dedicated to the first service provider and being capable of being configured by the first service provider, a second portion of the common resources being dedicated to the second service provider and being capable of being configured by the second service provider.

4. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 3, wherein said unified and integrated switch includes a first logical communications node associated with the first service provider and capable of being dynamically configured in a customized manner by the first service provider and a second logical communications node associated with the second service provider and capable of being dynamically configured in a customized manner by the second service provider.

5. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 3, wherein said unified and integrated switch is within said first network, the first service provider being a wholesale service provider, the second service provider being a retail service provider.

6. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 1, further comprising:

means for calculating cost information for use of the first resources and the second resources for the inter-provider IP service, the cost information including a cost for the first resources and a cost for the second resources.

7. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 6, further comprising:

means for creating an electronic contract between the first service provider and the second service provider using the cost information.

8. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 6, wherein said means for calculating comprises:

a software engine configured to receive the request for the inter-provider IP service, calculate pricing scenarios using the request, obtain real-time resource information, calculate real-time prices for each of the pricing scenarios using the real-time resource information and customize the cost information based on the first service provider, the second service provider, the request and the real-time prices.

9. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 8, further comprising:

a database for storing the real-time resource information.

10. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 9, wherein said means for provisioning includes an operational support system connected to said software engine and said database, said operational support system being further configured to manage the inter-provider IP service in real-time.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for provisioning an inter-provider internet protocol (IP) service across at least two service providers, comprising:

receiving a request for the inter-provider IP service;

determining real-time availability of resources within respective networks managed by ~~of~~ the at least two service providers needed for the inter-provider IP service; and

automatically provisioning the inter-provider IP service between the respective networks of the at least two service providers using the determined resources.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

advertising the availability of the resources of the at least two service providers between the at least two service providers.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

providing a unified and integrated switch for the at least two service providers, the unified and integrated switch having common resources;

configuring a first portion of the common resources dedicated to ~~the~~ a first service provider of the at least two service providers by the first service provider; and

configuring a second portion of the common resources dedicated to ~~the~~ a second service provider of the at least two service providers by the second service provider.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13, further comprising:

dynamically configuring in a customized manner a first logical communications node by the first service provider; and

dynamically configuring in a customized manner a second logical communications node by the second service provider.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the first service provider is a wholesale service provider and the second service provider is a retail service provider.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

calculating cost information for use of the resources of the ~~first~~ at least two service ~~provider and the second service provider~~ providers for the inter-provider IP service.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Clam 16, further comprising:

creating an electronic contract between the ~~first~~ at least two service ~~provider and the second service provider~~ providers using the cost information.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 16, wherein said calculating comprises:

calculating pricing scenarios using the request;

obtaining real-time resource information;

calculating real-time prices for each of the pricing scenarios using the real-time resource information; and

customizing the cost information based on the ~~first~~ at least two service providers ~~provider, the second service provider~~, the request and the real-time prices.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, further comprising:

collecting the real-time resource information; and

storing the real-time resource information.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein said provisioning further comprising:

managing the inter-provider IP service in real-time.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein said provisioning further comprising:

incorporating network infrastructure and resources in said provisioning;

incorporating business relations among the at least two service providers dynamically and in real-time in said provisioning, wherein the business relations include at least contracts and prices; and

incorporating business objectives in said provisioning, wherein the business objectives include at least one of financial ratios, service volume and profitability.